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Interest is increasing in the education of exceptional children. Rapid progress in special education for gifted children takes the form of innovative, "enriched" and accelerated programs. In many cities there are classes for the hard-of-hearing, the partially blind, and others physically and mentally handicapped.

Vocational education and occupational training

Vocational education and occupational training at the secondary level have grown considerably in the past ten years. Most regular secondary schools provide a limited number of choices in such subjects as agriculture, home economics, shorthand and typing. Vocational, technical and commercial high schools are an integral part of the secondary-school systems of some provinces. Composite schools, whether urban or regional, usually provide several optional programs (in academic or technical subjects, agriculture, home economics and commerce), and may allow individual students to choose courses from different programs.

Provincial trade-schools are operated by the provinces to complement the work undertaken in vocational high schools. These are essentially trade-schools offering six-week to two-year courses, mostly at the secondary level. Some schools of this kind offer a wide range of courses, from engineering technology to stenography, and from business-machine operation to cooking.

Private trade-schools provide a large variety of courses, in such subjects as beauty culture and diesel engineering; they prepare students for occupations as different as postal clerk, musician or welder. There are over 225 private business colleges that train typists, stenographers, bookkeepers, office-machine operators, secretaries and others. Most offer part-time and evening courses as well as full-time day courses, and a few offer correspondence courses.

Community colleges and related institutions

Although universities have been and still are the predominant and traditional institutions offering tertiary education to secondary-school graduates, alternatives exist in the form of community colleges and related institutions. Community colleges have certain characteristics more or less in common -- none grant degrees, all are oriented to community needs. Such colleges offer one, two or three years of study beyond secondary school. The chief function of the colleges is not research but teaching. Many are public institutions stressing an open-door policy and are provincially controlled; others are private. Instruction available to both full-time and part-time students is offered during the day and in the evening.

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